
Transportation Committee

ESSB 5121

Brief Description: Assessing long-term air transportation needs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Swecker, Poulsen, Schmidt and Haugen).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment and report results by July 1, 2006
- Requires the DOT to conduct a twenty-five year capacity and facilities market analysis, forecasting demands for passengers and air cargo, and report results by July 1, 2007.
- Directs the Governor to appoint an Aviation Planning Council on how to meet forecasted needs.

Hearing Date: 3/24/05

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background:

Counties and cities planning under the Growth Management Act are required to include in their comprehensive plans a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities are those facilities typically difficult to site, including airports. Additionally, no local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

Summary of Bill:

The Aviation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT Aviation) must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment. The assessment must include a statewide analysis, regarding both commercial aviation and general aviation, of existing airport facilities, and passenger and air cargo transportation capacity. However, the primary focus of the assessment must be on commercial aviation. The assessment results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations, by July 1, 2006.

After submitting the statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment, WSDOT Aviation must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities market analysis. The analysis must include a statewide needs analysis of airport facilities, passenger and air cargo transportation capacity, and demand and forecast needs over the next twenty-five years. A more detailed analysis must be conducted regarding the Puget Sound, Southwest Washington, Spokane, and Tri-Cities regions. The analysis must address the forecasted needs of both commercial aviation and general aviation; however, the primary focus of the analysis must be on commercial aviation. The analysis results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations, by July 1, 2007.

Upon completion of both the statewide assessment and analysis, the Governor must appoint an Aviation Planning Council to make recommendations, based on the findings of the assessment and analysis, regarding how best to meet the statewide commercial and general aviation capacity needs. The recommendations must include the placement of future commercial and general aviation airport facilities in regions determined to be in need of more improved aviation planning. The ten-member Aviation Planning Council must be composed of various aviation planning stakeholders. The Council expires July 1, 2009.

If specific funding for the purposes of this act is not provided in the transportation budget by June 30, 2005, the act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.